

Title: Cloud service implementation through the GÉANT Framework

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Presenter's biography:

Regina Murray



Regina Murray leads the Higher Education sector for Microsoft in Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) working with Ministries of Education, Education institutions, Educators and students on the transformative potential of technology for teaching and learning. Prior to this role, she led the Western Europe Education business with responsibility for field sales teams and engagement with education leaders and the European Union.

From 2005 to 2008, Regina was the Public Sector Director for Microsoft Ireland covering both Government and Education.

Regina has led sales and marketing businesses with Microsoft for over 21 years both in Europe and the United States. During her 10 years in Silicon Valley she was responsible for Microsoft's Partner and Solution Sales divisions focused on large enterprise customers such as Bank of America, Chevron Texaco and Hewlett Packard. Regina spent two years leading Microsoft's Training and Certification business in the Pacific Northwest.

Regina is a member of the Business Information Systems Advisory Board at University College Cork. She holds a BA degree in Economics from University College Cork, Ireland.

Garvan Mc Feeley



Garvan is HEAnet's Brokerage Services Manager. He has over 25 years' experience in ICT across a range of sectors including education, telecommunications, manufacturing and financial services.

He holds a B.Sc. in Computer Applications from DCU and an M.Sc. from TCD in Management of Information Systems.



Dr. Ray O'Neill

Dr Ray O'Neill is head of ICT and Procurement at QQI. He has promoted the early adoption of cloud technologies migrating QQI services to MS Azure and O365. This has supported digital transformation reducing support efforts and increasing the range and quality of services available to staff and other stakeholders. The early adoption has provided many insights into the challenges and opportunities of cloud migration and managing services in the cloud including managing costs.

Presentation description: 25 minutes

GÉANT's IaaS Framework is delivering concrete benefits to NRENs and institutions. This presentation will review some of the challenges to cloud deployments and the benefits of the GÉANT IaaS Framework.

A key element within this presentation will be the delivery of a case study within Ireland for a customer, QQI who transitioned to the GÉANT Framework in June 2017 and has achieved significant benefits and cost savings.

Case Study: QQI

QQI needed to improve a vital, mission-critical legacy application that was operating on outdated hardware and inefficient software.

The application was extremely visible; spanning multiple systems, educational course information, public data and a high traffic public interface.

We propose that we use the QQI case study to demonstrate the benefits of the GÉANT IaaS Framework and the importance of collaboration with speakers from Microsoft (Regina Murray), HEAnet (Garvan McFeeley) and QQI (Dr. Ray O'Neill).

We propose to cover the following key topics as part of the presentation;

1. Cloud journey:

QQI decided to move away from the costly data centre based solution and embark on a gradual migration of the application to the cloud with Microsoft Azure, alongside adoption of Office 365.

The Azure model gave them the flexibility and scalability they needed. While the software application remained the same QQI was able to refine and gradually upgrade components, move from a single front-end to three, and manage the significant peaks and valleys in capacity demand. QQI evaluated more methods to simplify infrastructure and support models, and to reduce costs.

2. The role of the GÉANT IaaS Framework:

The launch of the GÉANT IaaS Cloud Framework in 2017 brought even more advantages. HEAnet helped QQI realign their existing contractual arrangement with Microsoft. Using GÉANT's framework agreement brought significant cost savings, through usage discounts and data traffic arrangements. Microsoft's licensing plans were further optimised by transferring existing on-premise educational license agreements into the Azure cloud. The 'Bring Your Own License' element of the GÉANT Framework, which Microsoft offers through their Azure Hybrid Benefit program, helped maximise value from existing server licenses.

3. Mitigating Risks:

Like most R&E institutions, QQI was concerned about data protection and security. The GÉANT Framework agreement ensured vendor compliance with EU data protection law.

Microsoft's efforts to ensure they pass all security audits were welcome and QQI felt they could not have achieved such a high level of security on their own.

4. Lessons Learned:

QQI's use of the GÉANT IaaS framework, with usage discounts, reduction of data traffic costs and transfer of existing on-premise server licenses, brought the actual total costs down by 33%.

5. Customer Testimonial:

"After moving 98% of our infrastructure in Azure, we don't have to worry about the physical hardware and administrative and contract costs are much lower," says Dr. Ray O'Neill, Head of ICT and Procurement. "Taking all this into consideration, the value of HEAnet facilitating our migration to the cloud is really immeasurable."

6. NREN Support:

HEAnet played an important role helping QQI maximise the GÉANT framework. HEAnet is more than just QQI's connectivity provider; they are considered a trusted advisor. "Using GÉANT's framework agreement with Microsoft brought QQI significant cost savings," says Garvan McFeeley, HEAnet's Brokerage Services Manager.

7. Summary

GÉANT IaaS tender is delivering real business value to institutions. The QQI example demonstrates this concretely. It also shows that the complexities of cloud are not insurmountable.